DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 025 297 LI 001 269

By- Surace, Cecily J.
The Human Side of Libraries.
Report No- P-4005
Pub Date Jan 69
Note- 17p.
EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$0.95
Descriptors- *Administrative Principles, Employee Attitudes, *Evaluation Methods, Goal Orientation, *Human Relations, Librarians, Measurement Goals, Objectives, Performance Factors, *Personnel Evaluation, Personnel Policy, *Special Libraries

This paper discusses current trends in personnel management, with emphasis on performance standards and employee evaluation. Advances in personnel management from the scientific management theory to the application of the "human side of enterprise" approach should be reflected in how library managers review personnel and operate their libraries. The work measurement and job description methods for establishing standards and evaluating employees are being discarded in favor of management by objectives. Closely allied to management by objectives is performance appraisal by results, a method of evaluation which involves the employee in a self-motivating and dynamic environment of commitment. Discussion and examples show that this performance appraisal technique is well suited for both personnel and departmental management in special libraries. (JB)

L/ 001269

ERIC/CLIS
JAN 30 '69
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

THE HUMAN SIDE OF LIBRARIES

Cecily J. Surace

ED025297

January 1969

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

001269

P-4005

ED025297

THE HUMAN SIDE OF LIBRARIES*

Cecily J. Surace**

The RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, California

There is a trend in the business community toward a democratization of business organizations -- a trend away from bureaucracy and a strict structural hierarchy of decision making. It is a trend which recognizes the need for free communication, regardless of rank; a trend which recognizes that the social needs and recognition of workers are as important as the acknowledgment of their technical competence. Yet very little of this movement is reflected in our library literature. If the literature discusses people, it is in terms of future manpower requirements, the lack of manpower, or what constitutes a professional librarian, and of course there's always discussion going on about library users. What guidance is given to the library manager who is confronted with a staff, professional and non-professional, that requires development, motivation, understanding and encouragement?

---

*Much of this paper was originally presented at the American Management Association Course #6513-60 on "Fundamentals of Company Library Management" held in Los Angeles on December 9-13, 1968.

**Any views expressed in this paper are those of the author. They should not be interpreted as reflecting the views of The RAND Corporation or the official opinion or policy of any of its governmental or private research sponsors. Papers are reproduced by The RAND Corporation as a courtesy to members of its staff.

This oversight must be just that. It cannot be intentional, nor is it because there are no personnel problems in libraries. Wherever there are people, there are personnel problems, and maybe more so in libraries, if we accept the image of the librarian as being meek and introverted and too timid to speak out in his or her behalf.

Therefore this paper is an attempt to provide a very general background on what's happening in the world of personnel management, particularly performance standards and employee evaluation. I will ask you to consider the special library as just another department, and the library manager as just another department manager. After all, that's the way top management looks at us.

We are experiencing advances in automation and technology, as well as management theory that affect us greatly as managers and workers. The advances in personnel management from the scientific management theory of Frederick Taylor in the 1900's to the application of the "human side of enterprise" as expounded by Douglas McGregor, have resulted in a new perspective in management patterns which should be reflected in how we as library managers review our personnel, both professional and non-professional, and how we operate our libraries.

It is people who make organizations successful. And through the years organizations have attempted to find the key to people -- how to motivate them, how to get them to commit themselves, how to evaluate them, how to reward them.

Every organization, including a library must have plans, policies, objectives, etc., to be used as means towards an orderly and purposeful direction of effort. Without these, an organization will find itself in chaos and meaningless activity. Every manager, whether he's a library manager or a manager of a sales department, has the responsibility to establish goals and performance standards within his group, and to provide a method (or methods) of evaluating the efforts of employees, individually and in groups.

I would like to review with you three methods available for establishing standards and evaluating employees, keeping in mind there is no one method that is all things to all organizations. The methods are work measurement, job description, and management by objectives. The technique you use will depend upon your company structure, its policies and procedures, the type of manager you are, the kind of staff you have, the organizational structure of your library, and the people you have selected to help you to get the job done.

Before you can evaluate a performance, there must be some standard or basis against which to make an evaluation. Work measurement techniques are a way of providing this basis. Work measurement techniques are largely based on quantitative data collected either from production statistics, from work sampling data, from time and motion study, etc. The appropriate method adopted usually depends on the particular job being studied.

In a library environment work measurement techniques can be applied to any job that is repetitive or routine, and which can be broken down into work units; for example, the circulation desk duties where one can measure the number of books discharged, or the number of books shelved in a given period; the cataloging department can measure the number of items processed, or the number of catalog cards filed, etc.

Work measurement techniques are an outgrowth of the scientific management period. They were principally applied by industrial engineers and flourished in manufacturing organizations and at the non-managerial levels of work. Performance standards based on work measurement techniques are supposed to supply information that will assist in determining manpower requirements and how many units of work can be completed in a given time period. Naturally tasks and jobs are defined precisely, and a clear definition of a worker's responsibilities is made. After all this is the basis on which evaluations and rewards are made.

The very fact that data must be collected before the standard is established gives you an indication of its value. It's a standard based on past performance -- even if the data is as current as an hour ago. Obviously I'm not fond of statistical standards and I'm not convinced they can provide a basis on which to motivate an employee. Besides, I wonder how useful it is to evaluate one employee against another based on a statistical standard? Aren't we creating an artificial and detrimental

atmosphere of employee competition? And is the more highly productive employee necessarily the best employee? An employee may be very productive, and yet contribute little to the job satisfaction of those around him. People do not work in isolation, or in a vacuum. They work in groups. Perhaps we should be evaluating the total group effort, and not the individual?

A work measurement technique which seems to have more merit because it has wider application is the motion study technique which analyzes a job, reviews the sequence of steps, and "simplifies" the job, providing a complete flow chart of work. Yet why was there so much furor over time and motion studies? Perhaps it was the way in which management went about it? Or perhaps the workers studied knew there was more than one way to do a job?

It is encouraging that work measurement techniques are in disfavor today. They have a way of implying that employees are like assembly lines; one has only to count the number of products they spew out. And it is somewhat unfortunate, but perhaps typical of the slowness of library management that a recent book by Dougherty and Heinritz titled "Scientific Management of Library Operations" should center its main thrust on the use of work measurement techniques in a library, techniques which tend to overlook the "human side of enterprise" and which have dubious value as motivators of workers.

If work measurement techniques are not used as our standard, what do we use? Scientific management theory established the need for job descriptions. It was considered important to analyze a job and provide a clear description of the duties and responsibilities involved in any given job. Job descriptions were also considered useful in personnel selection and in setting work standards because they provided a description of the work performed, how and why the worker does it, and the skills required.

Have you reviewed a job description with an employee after he's been on the job a while? Fortunately for us, employees tend to modify, and most often, improve on our attempts at pre-structuring their job relationship. This is not to say that job descriptions are not useful, but rather to emphasize again, that the "human side of enterprise" is remarkable indeed, and if the employee has modified his job, what's happened to our standard?

But in addition how useful is it really to provide a job description for a cataloger, or reference librarian, or any librarian on your staff? Job descriptions are not necessarily rigid, but shouldn't a professional librarian's job be one of flexibility, innovation and broad responsibilities? And just how do you express these in a formal job description? Or do we write job descriptions for the exercise?

Rigidity of job descriptions, and the fact they are task-oriented, may also inhibit the possibility of job enlargement or enrichment for the clerical employee. A new approach to job descriptions suggests that job descriptions

be based on systems of work flow. I have recently experimented with this at RAND, expanding the role our interlibrary loan assistant plays in our book purchase policy, and providing additional reference training to involve her even more in the verification of references. For the interlibrary loan assistant this appears as job enrichment (which it is) but from management's point of view it is that, and also a change in our organizational flow of work, and a change which breaks down if even slightly, some of the organization chart structure which sets up three separate and independent units -- interlibrary loan, reference and the order section. This article is not on the organizational structure of a library, but I think you'll agree libraries will be organized differently in the not too distant future. And one of the reasons will be the continuing influence and application of the behavioral science methods and techniques in management -- a human relations approach that clearly places the emphasis on human understanding, group organization, the responsibility of management to the worker, and fluid, task-oriented organizational structures. This latter, by the way, is already being forced upon us by our application of computer technology to library service.

Now that work measurement and job descriptions have been discarded as the basis for performance standards, I would like to discuss a more modern method for establishing performance standards and evaluating employees. Earlier I said every manager has the responsibility to provide plans, policies, and objectives specific to his department and consistent with the purposes of

the corporate organization. More specifically, each section within a library should have objectives, as should each employee. Just how effective we are as a library, as a department, as a group, or as an individual employee, will be judged on how well we accomplish our objectives. Thus how well the management objectives are formulated at each level of the library organization, and how well the group or individual is integrated into the section or department, is a management responsibility at all levels of supervision in a library and may be the test of success or failure in a library -- or any department.

How are these objectives established? By education and communication. The library manager must translate the company's or organization's information requirements into a common goal for the library supervisors, making clear what results are demanded of them; and each supervisor in turn must be able to communicate these objectives to his employees, making clear what is expected of them. And I might add this is true whether you are in a one-man library or a 50-man library. You must know what is expected of you, so you can establish intelligent performance standards for yourself and your staff. For it is in the stating of expected results that standards are established. In today's jargon, this is management by objectives, and a part of this is performance appraisal by results.

In any organization where people are the key to success, the way we evaluate our employees should be a dynamic, motivating force. Performance appraisal may serve many purposes -- it can help the

employee to be aware of his strengths and weaknesses, where he stands, how he is doing, and how he can perform better; it can help the supervisor select promotable individuals; it can help in salary reviews, etc.

Performance evaluation or appraisal techniques have been modified over the years, reflecting again the influence of behavioral research. Traditionally managers evaluated their employees on the basis of personality traits and attitudes: appearance, leadership, judgment, loyalty, etc. This method places an unfair burden on the supervisor, or as McGregor puts it the supervisor is "playing God." But also how accurate or valid can these evaluations be when they are based on subjective, ambiguous terms? And just how useful are they in motivating an employee to perform better?

As was mentioned earlier, closely allied to management by objectives is performance appraisal by results, a method of evaluation which involves the employee in a self-motivating and dynamic environment of commitment. The objectives of performance appraisal by results is to motivate the employee to set for himself, in consultation with his supervisor, an objective or objectives, to be accomplished within a certain period of time. The objectives are usually within the defined scope of the employee's job, although they don't have to be. In fact a library lends itself to project orientation, and we may want to develop our employees, particularly our librarians, to operate on a project basis, rather than a functional basis. I alluded to this when I mentioned computers in libraries are forcing us to

look at our functional areas as unrealistic structures. And I wonder if we have an obligation to develop librarians with broad capabilities, rather than specialized ones?

There are variations on the theme of performance appraisal by results, but briefly this is how it works:

1) A supervisor and his subordinate get together to discuss the employee's job and responsibilities.
2) The employee is asked to establish performance objectives or goals consonant with his responsibilities. The goals should be achieved within a certain time period.
3) The supervisor and the employee agree on the objectives and the time period.
4) Provisions are made for consultation with the supervisor.
5) At the end of the period, they meet again to discuss the results and how they compare with the original objectives.
6) New objectives are set.

It is easy to see how this method reduces the influence of personality traits and subjective evaluations and focuses attention where it belongs -- on the job. The employee has selected and committed himself to objectives based on his knowledge of what is expected of him, and his understanding of the overall objectives of his supervisor; the results will also be evaluated by him and his supervisor; the supervisor has assumed the role of counsellor

and guide, rather than "God," and he is giving encouragement and guidance to his employee. Both stand to profit from their experiences, the opportunity for greater job satisfaction is evident, and the objectives of the organization are being accomplished.

It is also easy to recognize that performance by appraisal results is more suitable to an organization with professional employees, many of whom may be in a supervisory position. But with imagination it may be applicable at clerical levels, involving individual or group participation, but only if the function being performed permits job modification, job molding, or job enlargement beyond the merely routine operations stage. It seems to me a library department because it is service oriented and very flexible, can provide this atmosphere to its clerical employees more readily than a manufacturing or non-service oriented department. If performance appraisal by results is applied at all levels, then the librarians and the clerical assistants can be evaluated with the same method, although naturally the basis of evaluation would be different. But at least the dichotomy that would result from evaluating clerical workers by another method is avoided.

And also, by basing your evaluation on actual job accomplishments (and they don't have to be jobs per se -- as a supervisor you may wish to develop an employee's communication ability, help him improve his relations with fellow workers, etc.), but by basing your evaluation on a pre-agreed upon objective, you are relieved of comparing employees against each

other, based on subjective evaluation of personality characteristics. After all behavioral scientists still don't agree on the ingredients of a successful executive, or employee for that matter.

Those of you in small libraries can establish objectives as well as those in large libraries. It takes the same things to run a small library as a big one -- except the dosage is different. In a small library for instance, by making your clerical assistant aware of your library's goals and objectives, how you plan to accomplish them, the role you expect the assistant to take in this effort, you can motivate him to contribute more and to look at his job in light of these objectives. And you in turn can set objectives for yourself with your supervisor.

In larger libraries, you can work through your supervisory staff, establishing objectives with them. They in turn can work with their subordinates, helping them to establish objectives. Whatever objectives are decided upon, it is important they are meaningful and contribute to the general goals of the library, and are within the capabilities of the employees. To extend an employee's capability is important, but to knowingly permit him to commit himself to an objective beyond his present capability and potential is supervisory negligence and can only frustrate the employee.

Once a performance appraisal by objectives method has been adopted, it should be continued since by its very nature it is cyclical. However, no performance appraisal technique is a substitute for the day-to-day contact between an employee and his supervisor. The importance of this

personal contact cannot be overstated. When an employee does a good job, he should be told; when he does a poor job, he should be told and counselled so he will improve in his understanding of what is expected and required. The ideal situation would be one in which the day-to-day contact is so well established and operational, no external appraisal system is necessary.

It is one thing to be able to discuss the various evaluation methods. But we are still subject to the evaluation methods established by our organizations. Some have no periodic evaluations, others may prefer to use the traditional appraisal rather than appraisal by results technique, and there are other methods. However, appraisal by results can still be adopted as a departmental working method. We still have a responsibility to develop our staffs and to motivate them. Appraisal by results can be applied on a small scale and gradually expanded to include the entire staff. Imagination and a desire to develop good working relations are essential, as well as an understanding of the library's objectives and the employee's capabilities. The method itself is very flexible.

So far we have highlighted individual performance. How can we measure departmental performance? A department is a sub-structure through which an organization accomplishes its objectives. The cataloging department, the reference department, etc. all have their own objectives and skills. It is these departmental objectives which in turn provide for the

individual accomplishments we discussed earlier. Departmental performance can be evaluated on how well the goals of the department are being met, or how efficiently it services the requirements of another department. For instance, a cataloging department may be effective according to the reference department because there is no backlog in cataloging, no backlog in cards to be filed, etc. The order department may be considered effective by individuals placing orders for new items and obtaining them with a minimum delay; and yet the cataloging department might evaluate the order department as less than efficient because it does not pass on sufficient cataloging data or what is passed on is not accurate, albeit it was accurate enough to purchase the item. Departmental performance can also be judged on the basis of cohesiveness of the group. If conflict is present because of differences in objectives and procedures, this will reflect on the departmental performance. If there is lack of communication, if new procedures are being developed without communication or feedback to the department, there is bound to be conflict. The attitude and morale of the department and the degree of job satisfaction can be a guide to its evaluation. And of course there is always present the evaluation by the users. This is, obviously, the most important evaluation, and perhaps the most difficult to accurately assess. In a small library, it is easy enough to contact the users and assess their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with individual library services and total library services.

In a large library this is not possible, so more formal techniques are required. Library management may have to resort to questionnaires, management interviews, or user surveys to determine the effectiveness of library services in the organization. And I won't discuss the problems of compiling a questionnaire and then interpreting the results accurately. Still, it is one thing to ask a user, or even non-user, about existing services, and receive an answer. But perhaps it would be more useful to discover why there are non-users, and to discover how a service can be improved, or how really useful and effective it is. And there is the important evaluation based on cost benefit analysis of a service. This is an area I know very little about from actual experience since I've never been confronted with having to justify an individual library service on the basis of cost effectiveness. Perhaps a reader can shed some light on this.

Finally, the important thing is for us to remember that as mangers we get things done through people, either as individuals, in task groups, or in departments. The more we communicate with our people and inform them of our objectives, the more we accept our responsibilities to develop their capabilities, and acknowledge their desire to develop and contribute their ideas, the more certain we will be of success in our mission.

Personnel problems, performance standards and employee evaluation are the same in any organization, whether it's a library or a computer department. We should look to management theory and the trends in personnel management to assist us in solving our personnel problems and understanding the "human side of enterprise."

REFERENCES

Dougherty, R. M. and F. J. Heinritz.
SCIENTIFIC MANAGEMENT OF LIBRARY OPERATIONS. Scarecrow Press, 1966, 258 p.

McGregor, D.
HUMAN SIDE OF ENTERPRISE. McGraw, 1960, 246 p.